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INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

DATE DISTR. 6 DEC 51

SUBJECT Construction of a Strategic Highway in Thuringia

NO. OF PAGES 1

PLACE ACQUIRED 25X1A

NO. OF ENCLS. (LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF INFO.

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

25X1

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1. On the basis of personal observations, as well as of statements received from an important official in Eastern Germany, source reports that a special highway has been under construction in Thuringia since late April or early May 1951. This highway is referred to among the population as a military highway. It starts in Saxony, crosses Thuringia, and runs past the Russian barracks for armored troops in Weimar, Rudolstadt, and Saalfeld.* From the armored barracks at Rudolstadt-Volkstätt, the highway goes in an almost straight line to the approximately 15 kilometers distant armored troop barracks at Saalfeld.
2. The highway is not laid along the existing route, but runs near it or parallel to it. It is a completely new construction and is somewhat narrower than the normal communication routes in that region. The work is being carried out by the state government of Thuringia. At many points Russian officers have been seen directing the construction.
3. The highway work is being pursued with great energy, and no obstacles are permitted to block its progress. Houses are levelled and overpasses or underpasses are constructed at road crossings and at railroad tracks. The work proceeds in twenty-four hour shifts. All organizations in the Eastern Zone are said to be required to contribute workers, and at many points women are employed in the construction work. Wismuth A.G. was required to supply the project with sixteen truck drivers from the Wismuth main office at Saalfeld.
4. Shortly beyond Saalfeld, the highway turns west and leads to Dietrichshütte, Taubenbach, and Gräfenhain. From that point it is about five kilometers to the border of the U.S. Zone, where highways lead in the direction of Coburg, Ludwigstadt, and Stockheim.

* Comment: Source personally observed the construction work near Rudolstadt and Saalfeld.

Document No.	007
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Class. Changed To:	TS S
Auth:	HR 70-2
Date:	22 AUG 1978
By:	DL

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